Permits approved for William Clark Park in Washougal

❑ WDFW manager expresses concerns regarding development

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The Captain William Clark Park at Cottonwood Beach project is another step closer to development, following the approval of three permits.

Hearing examiner Larry Epstein has approved the shoreline substantial development permit, site plan review and wetlands permit for the 80-acre endeavor. Individuals including Camas City Administrator Lloyd Halverson and Port of Camas-Washougal Executive Director Sheldon Tyler, expressed support for the project at a recent public hearing.

"This is a dream come true," Tyler said. "It will be a place where friends meet, and there will be larger gatherings."

Letters in support of the $2.7 million project were sent by Camas Mayor Paul Dennis and Roger Daniels, community liaison for the East County Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Committee.

Concerns about the project were expressed in writing by David Brown, office manager and project executive of the Berger/Abam Engineers Inc., office in Portland, Ore.; Dan Guy, Southwest Washington Habitat Branch Chief of the National Marine Fisheries Service; and Carl Dugger, the assistant regional habitat program manager with the State of Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Dugger, who served as a Port of Camas-Washougal commissioner from 1988 to 1997, said he is concerned the project could adversely affect fish and wildlife habitat. He is supportive of a seasonal facility that would be removed at the end of the summer boating season instead of construction of a permanent pier, float and breakwater at Cottonwood Beach — an area that is subject to flooding every five to 10 years.

"We are concerned that a 'maximum development' alternative has evolved, in that it will bring more development and more crowds into Cottonwood Beach, a very sensitive area for both fish and wildlife species," Dugger wrote. "If this proposed park is to truly honor the heritage of Lewis and Clark, it would seem more appropriate to leave the area much as they left it, in a relatively primitive condition."

Dugger will meet with various officials involved with the Cottonwood Beach project, Thursday, Feb. 12, at 2:30 p.m., in his office, at 2108 S.E. Grand Blvd., Vancouver.

Construction of the park is expected to begin this summer and end in July 2005. The project will include new trails and paved ramps, picnic and camping facilities, restrooms, parking, benches, drinking fountains and bike racks.